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Charmed: The Good, The Bad, And Why We Love it Anyway

Written by Kristina Adams | April 23rd, 2012 Posted in Entertainment, Reviews, TV and Film | Comments: 1

Charmed is a cult television series that ran for eight years between 1998 and 2006. It was created by Constance M. Burge and Brad Kern took over two years later due to creative differences. She left the show completely two years later. It originally starred Shannen Doherty, Holly Marie Combs and Alyssa Milano, but in 2001 Doherty was replaced by Rose McGowan. Nobody knows for sure why she left. In 2006 it became the longest running television show with female leads. However, this title looks set to be taken away by Desperate Housewives. Yes, I am bitter.

For those of us that love the show, we have an obsession with it that mimics the fans of other cult shows like Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Xena: Warrior Princess. However, the more of a fan you are, the more you watch it, and the more you watch it, the more you notice that it's not as perfect you'd like it to be. Therefore, here is a list of thirteen reasons why it's awesome, and twelve more why it's really, really, irritating.

The power of three will set you free...

Good: It Had ~~Three~~ Four Strong, Female Leads
Each of the sisters was very different, and they each grew as people throughout the course of the show. Prue was the leader. The control freak, the demon hunter, the woman that put her career and her witchcraft before her personal life, often with troubling consequences, like in *Just Harried*, when her astral self almost ruins Piper's wedding. Piper was the middle sister, and she started off as neurotic and uncomfortable with her powers, but after Prue died, it was up to Piper to look after the family. She begrudgingly embraced the role, turning into a matriarch that would make any family proud.

Paige was the sister's long-lost half sister. She was half witch, half whitelighter, meaning that her powers were somewhat different than that of the original threesome. She was raised as an only child, meaning that she was independent and headstrong. She had to learn how to work as a team when she became a part of The Charmed Ones, and she also had to learn how to use her powers quickly to defeat The Source (of all evil).

Then there was Phoebe. Phoebe started off as intelligent, insightful, but slightly short on direction. In season two, she decided to go back to university to get a degree in psychology. This degree later helped her in her job as an advice columnist, something which she acquired in season four and kept until the show ended. However…

Bad: Towards the End, Phoebe Got Really, Really Irritating
"I need a boyfriend! I need a husband! I need a baby!" That's all I heard every time Phoebe opened her mouth in the last two seasons. From the moment she had a premonition about having a beautiful little girl, she became *obsessed*. She was so irritating that I was hoping that she would leave the show and Prue would come back and replace her. Her life ended up revolving around it instead of her magic or career. She was so desperate that she had her powers taken off her (which was also due to budget cuts on the show, but they still could've found a better way to do it).

Look behind you!

Good: It Was Relatable
Everyone could relate to at least one of the sisters, if not from their personalities, but from their experiences. It's shows where people can relate to characters and their situations that last.

Bad: Brad Kern Ruined It
Cole Turner is one of the show's most popular characters. However, show creator Constance M. Burge didn't want him to be added in; she wanted the focus to be Piper and Leo's relationship instead. Brad Kern was the one who wanted Cole added in, and Burge knew that she wouldn't win the argument, and she therefore stepped down as showrunner but stayed on as advisor.

From the moment that Burge stepped down, it stopped being about three sisters who just happened to be witches and became all about the magic. The was exacerbated further when Burge stepped down fully with the introduction of nymphs; Greek gods; valkyries; Egyptian gods; magic school; gnomes; ogres and more. It

became cliche in its handling of the magical world. Storylines were less thought out, and costumes become more and more revealing. In the seventh season, McGowan, Combs and Milano stepped up and refused to wear the revealing clothes that they'd been forced into that were often completely unnecessary. Originally, when the girls wore revealing clothes, they weren't always about making them look sexy, it was just about a cute outfit.

Billie an Christy, peering out of the window when they should've been walking out of the door.

Bad: Billie and Christy
If you mention Billie and Christy to any fan who was with Charmed from the beginning, they may well enter into a very long rant about how the two sisters ruined the show. Kaley Cuoco, who played Billie, even admitted that she found the drama side of things difficult, along with the stunts, and would therefore go back to comedy (which she did, with The Big Bang Theory). She does comedy well. Charmed, she didn't do well. However, the blame does not sit just on her. The concept of the two sisters was in Kern's head from season five. Thankfully he didn't bring them in any sooner.

Good: The Chemistry Between (Most of) the Actors
In the unaired pilot, Phoebe was played by a different actor, as was Andy Trudeau. Nobody knows why either of them left, but, if you've seen the unaired pilot, you'll be glad that they did. Milano and T.W.King have far more chemistry with the other actors than Lori Rom and Chris Boyd did, and they also fit the characters far better. Some would also say that they were better actors, too…

Good: Piper and Leo
Everyone rooted for Piper and Leo. They were so good together, and yet they had obstacles thrown at them throughout their relationship. From their relationship being outlawed for the first two years, to Leo being taken away from her until they defeat the "Ultimate Power", they were thrown all sorts, but it showed that love really does conquer all.

Piper and Leo on their wedding day.

Bad: When It Became A "Comedy"
If you look up the show on IMDb or NetFlix, they file it under the category of "comedy". Charmed was not a comedy, nor was it intended to be. It was supposed to be a supernatural drama. However, you could say that towards the end, it did turn into a little bit of a laughing stock…

Good: The One-Liners
One thing that never changed about the show over its eight year run is that it always had great one liners, from Phoebe's, "Nothing perks up a girl's career like sending her husband straight to hell," to Piper's asking "if Prue was going to have sex with someone other than herself this year."

Avatars Alpha and Beta.

Bad: The Avatars
They came to convert Cole, but he got himself killed, so they came back two years later for Leo, turning him from a good guy into a guy that does the wrong thing for the right reasons. They also made him go crazy.

They tried to create a utopia, but their version of a utopia was just too good. We need the good in order to balance things out and to fully appreciate the good around us.

Oh, and they had cheesy names: Alpha, Beta and Gamma.

Good: The Theme Tune
The show's theme tune is a cover of The Smith's *How Soon is Now*, sung by Love Spit Love. It was catchy, it fit with the show, and, unfortunately…

Bad: The Theme Tune Isn't In the Season Eight Credits
When it aired, the theme tune was used. When it went to DVD, the contract was up, and they didn't renew it. They shoved some random classical music in its place.

Good: The Philosophies
The show followed many Wiccan rules (especially in the beginning). One of those in particular, is that everything happens for a reason. It's something that people often forget, and that helps to add perspective when you're suffering from a difficult situation. It's a lesson that many people should keep in mind, regardless of their religion.

Bad: The Network Didn't Care
All three lead actors have said at some point that the network just didn't care about them. They weren't treated well, nor was the show. A prime example is above.

The Charmed house.

Good: The House Was Pretty
I don't need to explain this one. Just look at it. Look at it!

Bad: The Set Didn't Match the House
The house that the sisters live in is real, and it's in Los Angeles. It also doesn't have an attic, particularly not one with a window, nor does it have a basement. The whole house is laid out *completely differently* than the set.

Good: Orbing!
Orbing is how whitelighters got around. It was eco-friendly, it was fast, and it looked pretty. It did make you a little bit dizzy the first couple of times, though.

Bad: The Cleaners
The cleaners were a part of a filler episode, and, in a later episode, a get out of jail free card. Where were they when Prue was killed, I ask you? Why did they need to go to Tempest, if that's what the cleaners were invented for?

The cleaners.

Good: The Spells Were Well-Thought Out
Whilst there may be shows centring around magic on our screens again, there's very little effort or focus put into the spells on them. With *Charmed*, the spells were both well thought out and well written, no matter what the spell was for.

Bad: The Dodgy Looking Demons
The demons and warlocks started off looking like everyday people, but the older the show became, the more ridiculous the demons looked. There also ended up being a heavier focus on demons than on warlocks and other supernatural bad guys (and girls), meaning that they ran out of ideas quickly.

Paige's car, a 2003 Volkswagen Beetle

Good: The Sisters' Taste in Cars
The sisters had good taste in cars. They just did. Phoebe drove a Mini Cooper, Paige drove a green Volkswagen Beetle. Piper inherited Prue's Jeep Cherokee.

Bad: The Plot Holes
I'm not going to list the plot holes in Charmed because I might make myself cry at how poorly written my favourite television show of all time is that is responsible for several of my most frequently used words and phrases, certain fashion choices (such as a love of ponchos until I was twenty) and philosophies. But trust me: they're there. And there's a lot of them.

Sirk, one dodgy looking demon with only half a demon face...

Good: It Set an Example
These days television shows are all about as much sex, violence and controversy as possible. Whilst the fashions ended up being somewhat revealing in the later seasons, the show was always fun for all ages, and it showed how you didn't need to have your knickers on and off like a yoyo in order to have fun.

Bad: Season Eight Was Rushed
For some reason, there was a desperate need for both Phoebe and Paige to be married off in the final season and have children, because apparently that's the only thing women want from life. Paige and Phoebe therefore had rushed relationships with Henry and Coop, and there was a desperate need to tie up as many things as possible. Kern referred to the final episode of *Charmed* as a "Valentine to the fans". Most fans disagreed. They just wanted Prue back.

Good: Despite Everything, You Can Look Past Its Bad Points
No one really knows why, but for some reason, you can look past its bad points and love it anyway. No matter how many times you get pissed off with the plot holes or the skimpy outfits, you just can't help but love it.

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One comment to *Charmed: The Good, The Bad, And Why We Love it Anyway*

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  May 7th, 2013 at 11:38
  Farel The Gecko says:

  Forgive me, but I'm a once been fan of this series. My interest re-awakened recently, because of a series of videos which have bashed this series (in case you're interested: http://thatguywiththeglasses.com/videolinks/teamt/ol/manic).

  Now I tried looking through the internet to find opinions on this series, and this is one of the smarter ones I found. I mean I used to like this show myself, but once Prue was gone, I gave up. I did give season 4 a chance, and I don't think they could have handled Page better than they did, but I did feel like things went out of control and so I've stopped following the show regularly, only occasionally and everything I saw from that point on made me so very very angry. The show wasn't perfect to begin with, but I looked over the bad things for the good that was in the show. Once Season 4 rolled in, the good slowly vanished out of existence and was replaced by some very awful things. The bad exceeded the good to me by far, and now I can't look at the series with anything else but anger.

  So why does your "I still like it" article make me happy? Because you do acknowledge the bad sides! That's a great thing to do. Whenever or not you can look pass the negatives and consider it to be still good is part of your own opinion, to which you have a full right. I just really think people should be objective as critics and acknowledge flaws of things they like. So even if I jumped off the Charm-train after Season 3, and can rant and yell about the rest of the show for hours and hours… I still have to give you a huge thumbs up for not being a blind fan. Kudos

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